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Southern District of West Virginia**

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**STATEMENT FROM U.S. ATTORNEY BOOTH GOODWIN**

**The following is a statement from United States Attorney Booth Goodwin concerning matters related to the investigations into the disaster at the Upper Big Branch mine here in the Southern District of West Virginia:**

“Shortly after the explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine, the Department of Labor through the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced that it would, at some point in its investigation, release all transcripts of witness interviews and conduct public hearings unless those steps would hinder the ongoing criminal investigation. MSHA has advised my office, which is conducting the criminal investigation, that it has substantially concluded its interviews and is contemplating moving forward with public hearings. I have advised the Department of Labor and MSHA that release of the transcripts and holding of public hearings at which testimony would be taken could hinder the criminal investigation and any potential prosecution. It would also be inappropriate to release only a portion of the transcripts or hold hearings where only select testimony is taken because it is not possible to determine at this time the bearing that information may have on the ongoing criminal investigation as it progresses. Therefore, after careful consideration, we have asked the Department of Labor not to release the transcripts or conduct public hearings that would elicit testimony at this time.”

- R. Booth Goodwin II, U.S. Attorney

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